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China After Twenty Years of Communism

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CHINA AFTER TWENTY YEARS OF COMMUNISM

For 20 years the lives of the Chinese people have been bound up to an almost immeasurable degree with the revolutionary vision of one man, Mao Tse-tung. Both the Chinese Communists' considerable successes during this period and their disastrous failures have stemmed from his sometimes startling views and his stubborn will. For although Mao was able to transmute the Communists from a small band of hunted revolutionaries into a dynamic, aggressive, totalitarian ruling elite, the policies with which he has been most closely identified over the years have often hindered the solution of problems and in many ways frustrated China's transformation into a modern industrial state.

Ten years ago the Chinese Communists were loudly congratulating themselves on having converted their once prostrate and humiliated nation into a strong, unified state that had not only altered the balance of power in Asia but had also assumed a position of primary importance in the strategic thinking of the world's superpowers. At that time China had made a good start on overcoming such traditional problems as overpopulation, low levels of living, illiteracy, and lack of technical skills. Even then, however, Mao was insisting on programs that would go far to cancel out the promising beginning.

In the past ten years Mao's programs have imposed severe strains on China's political system, causing serious dislocations in the economy and contributing to increasing cynicism and disillusionment among large segments of the population. During the last three years, especially, China has very nearly been torn apart by a convulsion brought on largely by Mao's belief in the necessity of uninterrupted revolution as he strives to achieve his vision of a selfless, equalitarian, and thoroughly communized China. During these three years—the so-called Cultural Revolution—Mao and his closest associates have demonstrated that they are willing, at least for a time, to sacrifice immediate gains in building up their underdeveloped nation in order to achieve a greater degree of ideological purity.

The Cultural Revolution has shattered the Communist Party and government apparatus, eroding national authority as never before in the two decades of communism. It has raised serious questions about the orderly transfer of power after Mao goes and has cast a heavy pall over the future of China's development. Today, China stands badly in need of a period of internal peace in which to repair the damage wrought by the excesses of the Cultural Revolution.

On balance, the trend during the past year has been toward regaining stability, but the task of reconstruction has barely begun, and the direction in which the regime will move is still not certain. China's leadership today does not even present the appearance of the monolith that Peking managed to parade before the world for much of the past 20 years. Instead, it is plainly a group of uncongenial personalities whose future decisions—with or without Mao—are not likely to be easily reached nor readily predictable. Finally, Mao himself, as long as he is able to exercise power, could decide at any time that a further push is necessary to ensure the success of a revolution he regards as uniquely his own creation.

THE MAOIST REVOLUTION

"All of our achievements in the past 20 years represent the great victory of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. Chairman Mao has taught us: 'We are undertaking an extremely glorious and great task never accomplished before. We must attain our objective; we can attain our objective.'"

Chou En-lai, National Day 1969

China today is a far cry from the exhausted, war-torn nation that Mao Tse-tung and his Chinese Communist Party took over in 1949. It had suffered through nearly a century of external aggression, exploitation, and internal strife. No truly effective central government had existed in China since the mid-19th century, and the combination of the Japanese invasion and the Communist-Kuomintang civil war had wrecked even what little central control existed in the country.

When Mao proclaimed the Chinese People's Republic on 1 October 1949, China's agricultural system was backward and inadequate. Its transportation and communications systems were disrupted, the monetary and financial systems a shambles, its industrial capacity minuscule, and regionalism, an endemic problem, flourishing. The people of China were culturally and psychologically in shock as a result of the impact of the 20th century Western world on their Confucian traditions.

Mao intended to demonstrate to the world the superiority of his version of Marxism-Leninism, and he moved quickly to implement a program he believed would overcome China's problems and make his country into a major world power. By 1957 China was well ordered, the party cadre had high esprit, and the people for the first time in a century had a regime to be proud of, the involvement in the Korean War having been managed well enough to make it seem a victory. Mao was the symbol of triumph over foreign aggression and of a better life at home, the very embodiment of the new China.

Signs of basic flaws in the blueprint for building the new China were already showing by 1957, however, when Mao's "hundred flowers" campaign revealed widespread opposition to his policies among the intellectuals. The extraordinary "Great Leap Forward" Mao initiated in

From horses . . .
to tanks . . . in 10 years

1958 further demonstrated his bent for radical policies. In essence, Mao's theory was that the mass mobilization of China's great labor force could overcome in a short period of time the nation's technological shortcomings and propel China's economy to a level equal to that of advanced Western countries. The manifest failure of the Great Leap Forward in the following year brought about the first real challenge to Mao's authority from Defense Minister P'eng Te-huai. For some time P'eng apparently had been seriously disturbed by some of Mao's policies, including his feuding with Moscow, and at a party plenum in 1959 he came down hard on the deleterious effects of the Great Leap on the national economy. Shortly thereafter, P'eng was replaced as defense minister by Lin Piao. Thus, Mao survived that challenge, but his prestige, nonetheless, had been shaken.

Mao became increasingly concerned during the early 1960s with what he deemed to be the insufficient political indoctrination of the populace. After the failures of the Great Leap Forward, Mao appears to have become even more firmly convinced that the remaking of men was the crucial task in ensuring the success of his revolution, more essential even than institutional change, technical and scientific modernization, or rapid industrialization. He did not lose all grasp of China's practical problems, but he became increasingly obsessed with ideological considerations and with the notion that Soviet-style "revisionism" was spreading in China and undermining his revolutionary accomplishments. This obsession grew as the Sino-Soviet split developed, particularly after Soviet technicians were withdrawn in 1960. To counter this trend, Mao instituted a series of indoctrination campaigns in the 1960s designed to stir up "revolutionary ferment."

Mao's concern over the decline in popular elan was not all imaginary. The failure of the leap forward had, in fact, widened the gap between his revolutionary goals and the interests of the people. A particularly important factor affecting Mao's next moves was that by the mid-1960s many of China's youth found the policies of the ruling establishment unsatisfactory. In this regard, the interests of the youth, who had been reared on revolutionary doctrine and who saw themselves in the vanguard, and those of Mao were beginning to coincide. Mao became increasingly convinced that many officials, even some members of the inner circle of the party leadership, had strayed from the path he had laid out and had become conservative bureaucrats instead of revolutionaries. Mao's belief that his revolution was running aground and his growing distrust of some of his long-time colleagues combined to produce the phenomenon known as the Cultural Revolution.

Mao Joins the Youth Rebellion

Red Guards Sally Forth

THE REVOLUTION UNDONE

The Cultural Revolution, which was launched in the winter of 1965-66 and which resulted in a massive assault by youthful Red Guards and revolutionary activists on the entire party apparatus in late 1966, was a bizarre situation in which the regime, in effect, conducted revolution against itself. Until that time all political authority was exercised in the name of the Chinese people by a small group at the head of the Chinese Communist Party who made all major policy decisions.

The Cultural Revolution has brought great changes in the top leadership over the past several years. Many long-standing leaders with great prestige and authority have fallen by the wayside, including Mao's one-time heir apparent, Liu Shao-ch'i. The new leaders who replaced them have not all risen through normal party channels. Of the 14 most important people ruling China between 1965 and the ninth party congress in April 1969, fully half were not even formal members of the party central committee chosen at the eighth congress in 1956.

The upshot of the drastic changes wrought by the Cultural Revolution has been very nearly to destroy the institutional structure that the once cohesive Communist leadership had painfully built up for almost two decades. Gangs of Red Guards dragged out party and government officials, dressed them in dunce caps, and forced them to recant their crimes. By early 1967, the party organization had been nearly dismantled, thereby making normal channels of command

Doing penance

ineffective. The governmental structure has also been affected, and much of the system that had been in existence since shortly after the Communists took power has been scrapped. Moreover, these tremendous political and institutional changes plunged China into violence and chaos for the better part of two years. Although Mao's voice in decision-making almost certainly remained decisive, the twists and turns of the Cultural Revolution, the alternation of phases of extreme radicalism and relative moderation, suggested that neither Mao nor other top leaders have fully understood or been able to control all the forces that were set loose. In effect, Mao's attack on the establishment unleashed destructive energies that have been channeled into competing interest groups, each striving for power—or survival—at the expense of the others.

On balance, however, even during the worst periods the country retained a certain cohesiveness and sense of national unity. Several factors seem to account for this. The charisma of Mao Tse-tung remained a strong unifying influence. Moreover, while Mao seemed ready to tolerate a high level of disorder in order to gain his revolutionary aims, he was willing to curb radical excesses at crucial junctures. Administrators and technicians such as Premier Chou En-lai and many of the military commanders were anxious to maintain national stability and never completely lost their capacity to exert moderating pressures. Perhaps most importantly, the People's Liberation Army—which remained intact as the only instrument of state control—was able to fill the administrative and political vacuum that had been created, particularly in the provinces.

THE ARMY IN POLITICS

One of the major results of the disorders associated with the Cultural Revolution has been the emergence of the People's Liberation Army as

The thought of Mao—army style

the primary instrument of political and administrative control in the country. The army, for example, took over responsibility for running the state railways, the national communications system, the civil airlines, and the local security apparatus. In addition, it assumed a wide variety of administrative tasks connected with industrial and agricultural production that had previously been performed by the party and government. The military was also given the job of supporting Cultural Revolution activities in the factories and in the countryside—a task heretofore performed by party functionaries.

As a result of being forced to assume the burdens formerly borne by China's enormous party and government apparatus, the army became deeply embroiled in the Cultural

Revolution, and the cohesion of the military establishment was severely strained. The army was being ordered to carry on largely unfamiliar political work for which it was ill equipped; and by being thrown into the center of the political arena, it was subject to very great and conflicting pressures. Within the military establishment itself, long-standing strains between officers oriented toward political action and those more concerned with professional military problems were undoubtedly exacerbated. Almost certainly there was some resistance within the army to direct involvement in the political struggle, inasmuch as this would tend to make the army's military mission more difficult to carry out successfully. Furthermore, the purge of numerous senior officers in December 1966 and early January 1967 had probably already created new problems involving army loyalties and aroused dismay among the military leadership as a whole, as most had connections with some or all of the senior officers who had been brought down.

Nevertheless, the army has remained generally loyal and responsive to orders from Peking. It has had its hands full, however, in trying to run the provinces. Local military leaders have tended to play the situation by ear and have attempted to interpret shifts in the balance of forces in Peking to their advantage. Thus, they have often become deeply involved in divisive political disputes within their new areas of responsibilities. In some instances, for example, a swing toward radicalism in Peking would lead some commanders to throw in their lot with the militant Red Guards in their localities. As the balance at the center shifted back toward moderation, they would find themselves opposed by other commanders who were anxious to curb militant behavior. For the most part, the multitude of administrative problems handled by the provincial military commanders has tended to reinforce their natural proclivity to espouse the administrative virtues of order, rationality, and clear lines of authority and to opt for a return to stability.

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEES

The central authorities remain committed to an eventual return to rule by a reconstructed party and government apparatus. In an effort to restore some semblance of civilian administration, the regime began setting up new provincial administrations known as "revolutionary committees." These bodies are an amalgam of old party and government cadres—who had managed to survive the onslaughts of the Red Guards—military representatives, and representatives of Red Guard organizations.

The revolutionary committees produced to replace the old provincial administrations seem inherently unstable and still far from effective instruments of the government. In most instances they appear able to function only because local military commanders have assumed leading positions in them. Although in many cases they are dominated by their military members, the fact that they are also composed both of old-line cadres and former Red Guards in practice often means that the committees are riven by factional quarrels and continued jockeying for power. This problem is magnified in many areas where subprovincial revolutionary committees—the organs administering basic-level units such as counties, municipalities, factories, and communes—do not share the same political outlook as the leaders of their provincial committee.

The problems within the revolutionary committees are compounded in many areas because of continued attacks and agitation from Red Guard remnants. Many Red Guard groups were disbanded in the summer of 1968, but it has become clear over the past year that a large number have been able to maintain their integrity under

various guises. In some cases these elements are used as pressure groups by their former leaders who have been given places on the revolutionary committees. In other cases, Red Guard groups that have won no positions on the committees are putting pressure on local governments to bring their representatives into the establishment. The whole picture is further clouded by quarrels among the Red Guard remnants themselves, which have often produced open factional fighting. Furthermore, ambivalent attitudes in Peking toward the role of Red Guard factions have made it difficult for local authorities to curb their activities. Thus, in spite of another crackdown on factional fighting ordered by the central authorities this July and August, the continuing power struggles that have affected nearly all of China's provinces are unlikely to abate soon. In turn, the capacity of the revolutionary committees to act as fully effective organs of government will continue to be a question mark.

THE PROBLEMS OF RECONSTRUCTION

The institutional destruction caused by the Cultural Revolution was enormous. The regime now faces the unprecedented task of reconstructing the almost completely shattered party apparatus. Although tentatively begun in 1967, the rebuilding process has been painfully slow, and it has clearly been beset by innumerable squabbles and difficulties. Perhaps most importantly, the party's prestige and morale have been badly shaken by the excesses of the Cultural Revolution, and it seems most unlikely that either can be easily restored. Many of the power struggles within the revolutionary committees will probably be carried over into the party-building process because leading members of the committees are expected to constitute the core of the new party branches.

The process is further complicated because Peking has not yet seen fit to clarify the relationship between the new party branches and the revolutionary committees. There are signs that the leadership may intend to replace the pre-Cultural Revolution parallel government and party structure with a single administrative structure in which the party branches will be equivalent to the leadership of the revolutionary committees. If this is so, it appears likely that the party members—probably many of them military men—will dominate the committees in coming months. The sharpest political battles in China may well be those over who controls the reconstructed party at the grass roots.

After three years of "revolution," cynicism and despair have invaded important segments of

A hoe and a Mao book for a diploma

Chinese society in addition to the party. The elan of government officials has been undermined by the Maoist attacks on "bureaucracy," and the future of many administrators is uncertain because much of the government machinery built up over 20 years is unlikely to be rapidly restored. Although the army has enhanced its political authority during the Cultural Revolution, many professional military men are probably troubled over the future relationship between army and state and its possible adverse effects on military modernization. Many of China's youth—who found an outlet for their discontents in the Red Guard movement—were once again disillusioned when Peking dethroned the Red Guards in the summer of 1968 and shipped many students off permanently to labor in the countryside. The troubles of youth have been compounded because China's higher education system was closed down during the Cultural Revolution. Many who graduated even before 1966 have been unable to obtain jobs in which they can use their skills. The discontent of students is shared by their teachers. Furthermore, it is impossible to estimate the future effects of the damage done to the more educated segments of China's population by the pervasive anti-intellectualism that marked the Cultural Revolution.

The task of restoring popular elan and of moving ahead with positive programs of long-range development will be long and difficult. Some initial progress has been made since the summer of 1968 when Peking unequivocally ordered the army to crack down on Red Guards and factional troublemakers in the provinces and began serious attempts to close out the Cultural Revolution and get on with reconstruction. Since then, a relative calm has fallen on the Chinese scene. Peking evidently felt the situation was sufficiently under control to move ahead in October 1968 with its first party plenum since 1966. That plenum placed the official stamp on the removal from the party of Mao's former second in command, Liu Shao-ch'i, and drafted a new party constitution that was approved at the long-overdue ninth party congress in April 1969. The leadership has shown itself still incapable of coming decisively to grips with many outstanding problems, however.

MORE MAOIST EXPERIMENTS

In addition to difficulties connected with rebuilding local party and government apparatuses, China's provinces are still beset by dislocations stemming from Peking's continued pursuit of a series of radical Maoist socioeconomic experiments introduced in late 1968. Last winter these programs ran into considerable resistance, and there have been signs since shortly before the ninth congress that Peking was adopting a more cautious approach to some of them. Nevertheless, the present muting of radical polemics does not appear to reflect a full-scale retreat to moderate, pragmatic policies but rather what seems to be an agreed compromise on a cautious, measured approach to radical ends.

Peking's present socioeconomic policies include rural reforms, population transfers, and changes in administrative structure designed to overcome certain long-standing economic problems and the deleterious impact of the Cultural Revolution on large sectors of the economy. The program is also aimed at achieving certain goals Mao believes are necessary to promote his unique vision of a "revolutionary" China.

One of Peking's aims in pushing a wide range of rural reforms is to generate in the countryside new resources to provide a significant increase in farm production, which in turn will help to spur over-all economic development. This policy is reflected in attempts to foster output of tools and fertilizers in small, local plants to be financed

largely by communes and brigades, and in educational reforms and the transfer of skilled workers and intellectuals from cities to rural areas. The ultimate objective is to move rural China in the direction of greater collectivization while reducing the gap between rural and urban society.

Since last fall, such plans as the proposed abolition of peasants' private plots (a major source of rural income) appear to have been sharply cut back because of strong popular resistance. Other programs, however, have been partially realized, and the direction in which the regime hopes to move is fairly clear. Peking, for example, is currently pushing the construction of production brigade and commune factories as a step toward greater collectivization. This program, in effect, constitutes a decentralization of industry and is designed to permit the state to draw upon the savings of local units to construct plants which, in turn, will largely serve the needs of agriculture. Moreover, by making a lower level unit such as a commune set up its own factories, the state is apparently seeking to preserve its limited national resources for defense and investment in a few key fields, such as mining, petroleum, and defense-related industries.

A number of other forced programs complement the regime's rural reform objective. A huge campaign to disperse the urban population to the countryside, possibly involving from 10 to 25 million students, party cadres, civil servants, teachers, medical workers, industrial workers, and others, is being pushed hard. Most of the newcomers are to do farm work, while others will become teachers in new rural schools, work in local plants, or serve as public health personnel or "agro-technicians." Some of the reports on the number involved presumably include officials and other urban residents who do periodic, temporary stints at manual labor, but the bulk of the transfers is evidently intended to be permanent. There are doubtless several noneconomic motives behind Peking's assault on various urban groups, including ideological remolding, easing urban population pressures, or attempts to rid cities of potentially troublesome groups. Nonetheless, Peking is clearly trying to step up water conservancy work, improve land, and boost agricultural output through the prodigal use of labor.

Current efforts to reform China's educational system are also closely related to Peking's rural and urban economic programs. Education in both town and country is being shortened and made largely vocational in nature. Authority over educational policy and selection of students will remain in official hands, but the cost of education is being transferred from the state to the farms and factories that are supposed to operate their own primary and middle schools. Most graduates of middle schools and universities in the future will go to jobs in rural areas, although a small number will go into industry. In keeping with the stress on agriculture, the number of children currently enrolled in primary schools in rural areas appears to be greater than was true prior to the Cultural Revolution, and an effort is being made to spread "technical literacy" among both children and adults. University education, largely suspended for three years, is to be resumed, although in a truncated, mainly technical form.

Some of the reforms individually make sense for the long run. Transferring large numbers of intellectuals, administrators, and even workers to the countryside, for example, may be one answer to the problem of modernizing the habits and attitudes of the peasants, a necessary preliminary to modernizing agriculture. Nevertheless, Peking's current campaigns have caused social and economic dislocations in town and countryside that have aroused widespread, albeit still low-level, popular disaffection. Dispersal to the countryside, for example, is highly unpopular in urban areas.

The disruption of families, the lower standards of rural living, and the prospect of a lengthy rustication have increased the personal insecurity of city residents and sparked both covert and overt resistance. There have also been numerous reports of peasant reluctance to accept the city dwellers, who place additional burdens on local food supplies and who make poor farmers in the bargain.

The disaffection of both peasants and workers has also been increased by Peking's experimentation with reforms in rural and urban wage systems, reducing the role of material incentives in favor of more "political inspiration." These efforts appear to be behind the growing number of reports late this summer of work slowdowns in communes and factories. Although the current social discontent has by no means reached dangerous proportions, it seems to be contributing to popular malaise and apathy.

Unless the more extreme aspects of the Maoist programs continue to be blunted, they are likely to undermine any constructive efforts to initiate long-range programs of development. At present, it appears that a number of policies may not even achieve the desired economic ends. The contribution that increased manpower could make to agricultural output, for example, seems fairly marginal, and whether there will be an intelligent use of available skills is problematical. What Chinese agriculture really needs is a careful, scientific, integrated, businesslike approach to the problems of seed, soils, water, fertilizers, and tools. Peking's current programs suggest that such an approach is not yet forthcoming.

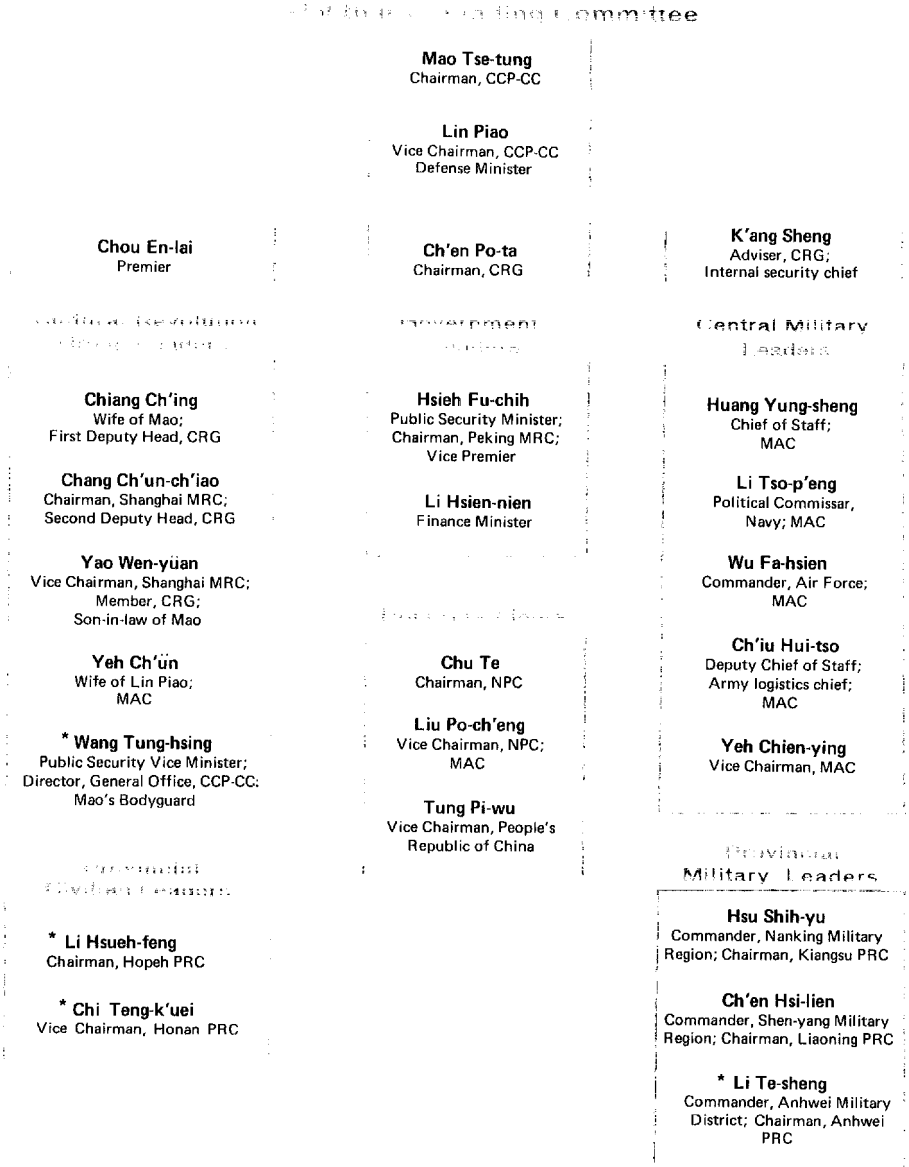
Indeed, except for weaponry and certain supporting industrial research and development, China appears to be turning away in many instances from science at a time when most of the major nations in the world are investing heavily in research and development, applied science, and the training of scientists to solve the problems of agriculture and industry. The current constriction of China's educational system appears to preclude the training of an adequate number of men sufficiently skilled to provide China's agriculture and industry with the foundation for impressive long-term developments. At this stage, however, at least the Maoists in Peking appear to accept this as part of the price that must be paid for purifying the revolution.

CHINA'S NEW LEADERSHIP

The ninth congress published no clear policy guidelines, and the mixed composition of the new ruling bodies it produced may well inhibit the making and execution of national policy. The congress, for example, "elected" a new, 279-man ninth central committee, a conglomerate much larger and more unwieldy than its predecessor. Its composition clearly mirrors the political damage wrought by the Cultural Revolution as well as the new power realities existing at the time of the congress. Nearly 70 percent of the living members of the old central committee were excluded from the new body. In sharp contrast with the old committee, which was largely composed of members of the central party and government, fully 65 percent of the new members were drawn from the provinces, reflecting the fact that during the Cultural Revolution the political center of gravity had to some extent shifted outward from the capital. Peking still remains the center of ultimate authority, but the make-up of the central committee shows the system has changed somewhat in the past three years to accommodate outlying power centers. Finally, the heavy representation of military figures in the new body reflects the army's enhanced political role, and the smaller representation of party and government officials is in harmony with their reduced influence.

Far more important to the political process in the future than the new central committee

Chinese Communist Leadership



* *Alternate Members*

CCP - Chinese Communist Party
CRG - Cultural Revolution Group
MAC - Military Affairs Committee of CCP
PRC - Provincial Revolutionary Committee
MRC - Municipal Revolutionary Committee
NPC - National People's Congress

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itself was its approval of a new, 25-man ruling politburo—the major decision-making body that had not functioned normally since late 1966. In the early stage of the Cultural Revolution, politburo membership had fluctuated wildly as leaders rose and fell with startling rapidity. By 1967, however, it became clear that ultimate decision-making authority rested with an inner circle of six leaders headed by Mao and Lin, abetted by an eight-man secondary elite—a grouping of uncongenial allies that was designated as Mao's "proletarian headquarters." The existence of this headquarters confirmed that the politburo as such was playing a negligible role in Chinese political affairs compared with what it did prior to the Cultural Revolution. Since the ninth congress, however, real political power almost certainly has once again gravitated to the politburo, obviating the need for such a special body as "Mao's proletarian headquarters" and signaling a return to a semblance of party normality at the top level.

The inner core of the politburo is a five-man standing committee, the highest policymaking body in China. This small group has constituted the effective leadership of China since early in 1967, functioning as a de facto politburo standing committee even during the most fluid and confusing periods of the Cultural Revolution. In addition to Mao Tse-tung and Lin Piao, it consists of Premier Chou En-lai, party theoretician Ch'en Po-ta and secret police specialist, K'ang Sheng. Both Ch'en and K'ang have tended to encourage Mao to push his revolutionary ideas in the Cultural Revolution and to work against the established order. Thus the new standing committee is weighted toward the more radical elements.

The full politburo reflects a better balance of the political equation that has emerged from the Cultural Revolution. In addition to the 13 members of Mao's former "proletarian headquarters," several important military leaders who had never been part of the inner circle before were added to the new body. Their presence attests to the fact that the importance of the military in the present scheme of things now has been officially recognized and legitimized. It is worth noting that of the new military men, three have been drawn from the military regions outside of Peking where they have direct control over large bodies of troops. A fourth, Army Chief of Staff Huang Yung-sheng, is probably able to serve as an additional influential spokesman for the regional military commanders. The presence of such important regional military leaders suggests that Mao and his inner circle on the standing committee will not take vital decisions without reference to the opinions of the military.

These two loose groups—the military and the radicals—seem to occupy center stage at the moment. The government bureaucrats associated with Premier Chou En-lai—who were badly hit during the Cultural Revolution—do not appear to have made much of a comeback at the ninth congress. Moreover, China's technological, scientific, and administrative establishment now appears to have little voice in top policy-making circles other than that of Chou himself.

China's new group of top leaders lacks the homogeneity and shared experiences that characterized the top leadership prior to the Cultural Revolution. Patrons of the Red Guards serve side by side with military and government leaders who, during the Cultural Revolution, were responsible for keeping the administrative machinery operating and who thus tried to deflect the destructive impulses of the Red Guards. There is considerable evidence that some members of the present politburo worked to destroy others at the height of the Cultural Revolution. Direct attacks on subordinates of the top leaders also almost certainly have created some instability among the regime elite and have fanned

suspicions that cannot be easily eradicated. Moreover, confused, imprecise directives issued in the course of the Cultural Revolution, vacillating policies, and the difficulty the top leadership faced in agreeing on new leaders to run the various provincial governments all suggest that considerable infighting and debates within the elite group have been continuing behind a facade of unity.

Division over policy and suspicion as to motives among these top leaders could erupt into open struggle when Mao Tse-tung dies or becomes incapacitated. At present an open conflict seems unlikely, but although Lin Piao probably will initially assume Mao's mantle, the succession will not be an easy one, and some form of at least covert battling among Mao's survivors will almost inevitably take place. Outright removal of Mao from power while he remains politically vigorous seems most unlikely, but renewed attempts on the part of some leaders to block or dilute his policies may be made.

Meanwhile, Mao himself continues to reign. He has been associated from the first with the Cultural Revolution in all its manifestations, and insofar as the denouement at the ninth party congress represented less than total victory for the "revolution"—and it seems clear that it did—then his prestige has suffered accordingly. But Mao's losses must be balanced against his gains. He has certainly disposed of many, if not all, of his real and putative enemies within the party machine, and even if all of the army leaders are not totally in step with him, he probably does not feel that the last several years have been a total failure.

ODD MAN OUT

Solutions to many of China's developmental problems will have to come from within because of China's isolation on the international scene. After 20 years of rule, the Chinese Communists have never been further from the realization of their basic foreign goals—supremacy in Asia and leadership of the world revolution. Many factors contribute to this clear-cut failure of Peking's foreign policy. The Chinese Communists were hampered from the beginning by a basic lack of experience in foreign affairs coupled with a world view badly distorted by both Maoist ideological dogma and traditional Chinese ethnocentrism. The willingness of the Maoists to eschew pragmatic solutions and short-term diplomatic interests in the name of "revolutionary principle" was increasingly coming to be the hallmark of Chinese foreign policy even before the Cultural Revolution. Perhaps more importantly, however, China has lacked requisite economic and military power to fulfill its ambitious foreign objectives. This situation was readily apparent when Peking came squarely into conflict with the vital interests of both superpowers—a dual collision that has effectively blocked Chinese policy, reinforced Peking's siege mentality, and further distorted its world outlook.

Nationalistic and ideological differences have combined to produce a growing enmity between Peking and Moscow, an enmity that has led to the present dangerous situation along the Sino-Soviet frontier. Peking's obsession with its dispute with Moscow has increasingly come to determine Chinese foreign tactics. Its attacks on Moscow and, in particular, its disparagement of Soviet aid to North Vietnam have resulted in the defection of two principal Communist allies—North Korea and the Japan Communist Party. At the same time, China's indiscriminate commitment to Communist-led armed struggle and revolution in the underdeveloped world produced a deep and abiding suspicion of Peking's sincerity and intentions, especially among the new and often "bourgeois" states of Africa. Moreover, Afro-Asian leaders are anxious to maintain a position of

nonalignment and have become increasingly alienated by Chinese insistence that they adopt narrow, anti-Soviet and anti-US positions. Peking's heavy-handed attempt in 1965 to stage-manage the abortive Algiers Afro-Asian conference was a classic example of China's penchant for arousing resentment in Afro-Asian circles.

Aside from such tactical inflexibility, China's foreign effort has been crippled by factors over which it has no control. For the most part, Peking can offer only the thoughts of Mao rather than the military hardware and developmental capital that third-world nations are interested in obtaining. In the Middle East, for instance, steadily increasing Arab dependence on Moscow's military and diplomatic support eventually transformed the Chinese effort there into a defensive holding action. Moreover, the overthrow of pro-Chinese governments in a number of Afro-Asian states painfully brought home to Peking the risks involved in seeking influence in such politically unstable areas. The sudden change of political climate in Indonesia in 1965, when a Communist coup attempt was thwarted, was particularly damaging because the alliance with Sukarno and the Indonesian Communists had been the foundation of China's efforts to mobilize and lead a "third-world bloc." The advent of the Cultural Revolution merely accelerated the uncompromising and isolationist course on which China was firmly embarked. Xenophobic withdrawal and chauvinistic excess in effect put Chinese foreign policy in deep freeze; rote Maoist ideology has been substituted for any serious thinking on foreign affairs, and Chinese behavior at home and abroad has alienated almost every nation maintaining diplomatic ties with Peking.

Peking is now embarking on a program to repair the damage done to its international image by "Red Guard diplomacy" and the Cultural Revolution. The return of ambassadors to their stations, the resumption of more conventional diplomatic behavior in Peking, and the reversion to a somewhat less chauvinistic propaganda line all underscore Peking's gradual return to a more normal foreign posture. This largely cosmetic process has not been accompanied by new and more imaginative strategy, however. Lin Piao, in his address to the ninth party congress last April, made clear Peking's present unwillingness to seek new avenues in foreign policy by strongly reiterating China's support for "revolutionary struggle" in "all countries" and its firm commitment to simultaneous confrontation of the US and USSR. Indeed Peking has flamboyantly persisted in the uncompromising revolutionary path responsible for its present isolation. In Asia, for example, China is maintaining its opposition to a negotiated settlement of the Vietnam war, continues all-out political warfare against the Japanese Government, and still calls for armed insurrection against most other non-Communist Asian governments. As long as the trend toward conventional diplomacy remains within such harsh confines, any significant improvement in China's present international position is unlikely.

PEKING MARKS TIME

China's current problems are immense, and as time passes without a final resolution, they grow more intractable. The country faces an enormous task of reconstruction, and Peking, as yet, has failed to formulate viable political solutions that might speed up the recovery. Part of the problem is that—as the violent convulsions of the past three years have shown—events themselves, often surprising and unforeseen, have frequently been the controlling factor, and no one has full control of them. Moreover, Peking's difficulties will be compounded until some institutional framework is fabricated to replace the one that was destroyed by the Cultural Revolution. The formation of a new politburo and central

committee at the ninth congress represents only the first step in reconstituting the party and state apparatus that had guaranteed the effectiveness of national authority prior to the Cultural Revolution. Charting China's future course is also made difficult because today's power center is not the loyal phalanx of Mao's lieutenants that was projected to the world in the regime's first 16 years. Taken as a whole, the men now occupying the positions of power are neither natural nor congenial allies.

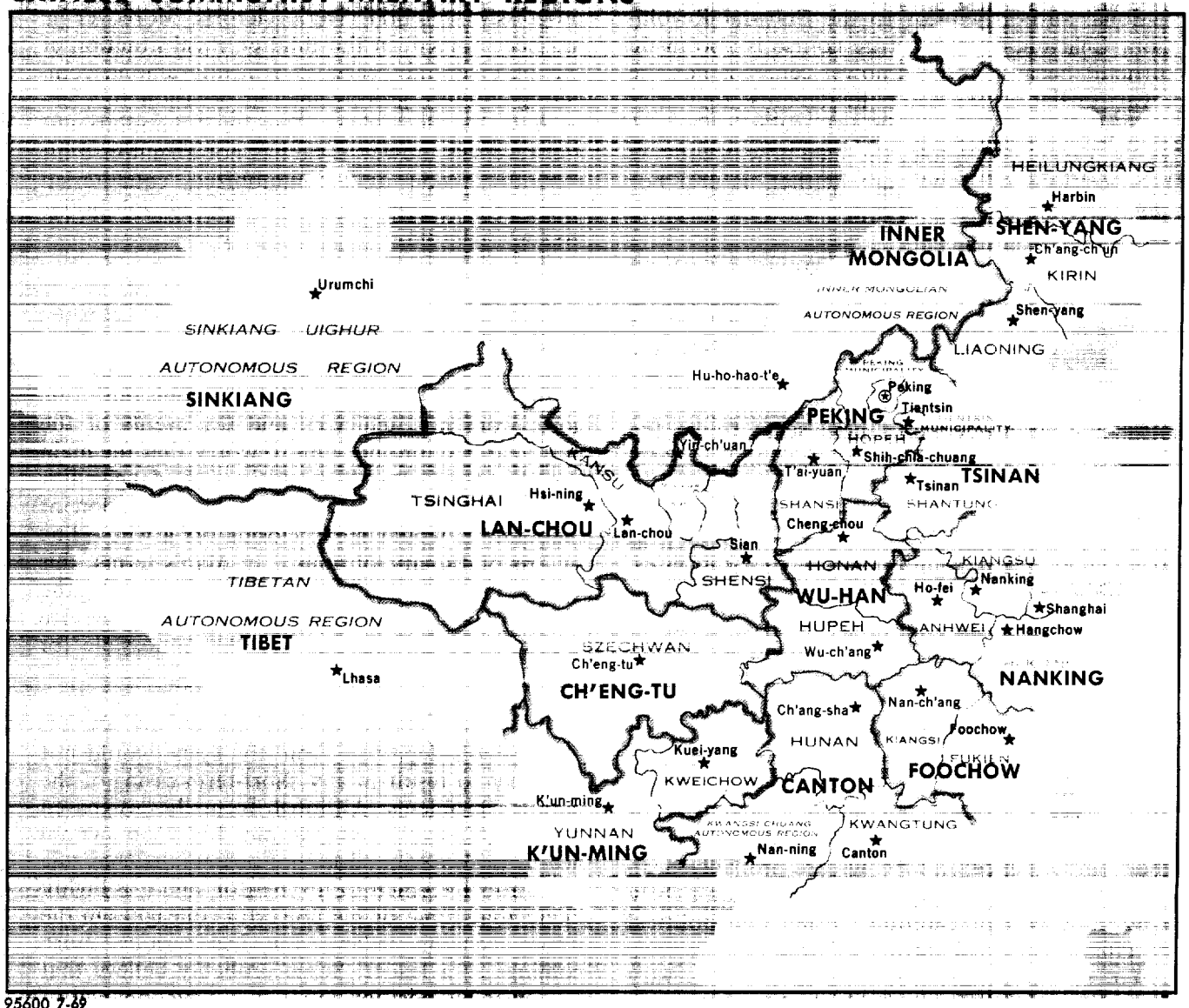
At present, there is little good information on how decisions are being reached in Peking. Some kind of consensus politics, however, seems to be at work. Unlike the situation before the Cultural Revolution, when a very few top leaders took quick decisions and issued orders by fiat, most important decisions now seem to be the result of wider discussion, political and personal infighting, and frequent compromise. The differentiated treatment in both national and provincial propaganda of thorny problems such as party rebuilding, military-civilian relationships, and economic decentralization suggests that sharp debates persist behind an ever-present facade of unity. Conservative-oriented military leaders in the new politburo probably will tend toward moderate policies, but their voices will be balanced by those of Mao's lieutenants who favored more extreme, radical measures over the past three years. Moreover, the use of sharply delineating terms such as "moderate," "radical," or "military" to describe these groupings distorts their nature, since, in fact, we are probably dealing with unfocused tendencies, rather than tightly knit units with a carefully formulated political program. Thus, advocates of the policies suggested by these various tendencies probably vary from time to time as individuals differently perceive their own self-interest.

The central figure and final authority remains Mao Tse-tung. His voice is almost certainly decisive, but he probably does not intervene personally except on issues of major importance. Now in doubtful health, [redacted] 25X6
[redacted] 25X6
Moreover he has been forced, in the fluid political situation of the past several years, to arbitrate among competing interest groups and on occasion to compromise his own views. Despite disappointment and reversals, however, he has not abandoned his romantic vision of a communized, equalitarian China nor his sense that the Chinese revolution is his own creation.

Mao may now be content to settle for some of the victories he has achieved over his opponents; his future course of action is still difficult to predict. He probably believes that his optimum goals were not achieved, and the events of the past year may prompt him to worry that the main thrust of the Cultural Revolution is in danger. For Mao to retreat any further in the direction of moderation would mean closing off a whole line of "revolutionary options." In Mao's terms, this would mean at least a partial surrender to the very forces he has been trying to extirpate since the mid-1960s, and this may be impossible for him to accept.

Mao's departure from the scene would not be likely to result in any short-term easing of the nation's problems. Although formally designated heir to Mao, the 61-year-old Lin Piao—whose health is also poor—does not possess the charisma or political acumen of his mentor, and it is highly likely that some of his powerful colleagues in the upper echelon believe Lin has serious shortcomings as a leader. Some probably believe that Lin owes his position more to his sycophancy of Mao than to any real leadership capacity. Moreover, that Mao felt it necessary to name Lin formally his successor speaks more loudly of his weakness than it does of his strength.

CHINESE COMMUNIST MILITARY REGIONS



Lin Piao: "As Chairman Mao has said..."

Regardless of the composition of a successor regime, it will probably lack the unity and strong central authority that characterized the Mao leadership until the advent of the Cultural Revolution. Considerable power will have to be shared with important military leaders in China's regions, and a new form of regional-central balance may prevail, with a configuration tending to conform to the jurisdictions of China's 13 military region commands. This does not mean that China after Mao will necessarily become a military dictatorship. The military certainly do not run China on their own terms now, and it is not likely that they will do so in the future. At present, however, the thorny problem of the relation of the military to a redeveloped Chinese Communist Party remains to be solved.

As in domestic affairs, Chinese foreign policy bears the personal imprint of Mao Tse-tung and his revolutionary principles; as long as Mao rules, there is little reason to believe that Peking's foreign approach will be significantly altered. His departure from the scene would no doubt open the door to some degree of change and innovation, and allow Peking some additional room for maneuver in a search for ways to regain diplomatic leverage.

Despite concern in both Moscow and Peking that Sino-Soviet border clashes may get out of hand, a permanent diminution of hostility toward the USSR seems unlikely. The fact that Peking now probably considers Moscow the greatest threat to China might, indeed, prompt some limited counterbalancing in the direction of Washington. Peking could conceivably see some merit in a reduction of tension with the US if only to complicate Soviet-US relations by playing on Moscow's chronic fear of a Sino-US rapprochement. The central issue of Taiwan, however, and a continuing US military presence in Asia, will almost certainly prevent any major movement toward a normalization of relations with the US.

The greatest promise for diplomatic gain lies in what Peking terms the "intermediate zone"—a group of Western capitalist states that the Chinese have to date shown little interest in cultivating. Peking is presently entertaining bids by Canada and Italy to establish relations—a development that has generated interest in several other West European states. If the Chinese maintain their stiff asking price for recognition, however—the severance of all ties with Taiwan—a general movement in this direction is not likely. Likewise, a serious Chinese effort to improve political and economic ties with Japan may be inhibited by Tokyo's reluctance to diminish its ties with Taiwan and the US. Turning to the third major area of Chinese diplomacy, there appears to be little opportunity for Peking immediately to improve its position within the Afro-Asian world. Chinese gains in this area will require the development of a more orderly domestic image, reversion

to the "peaceful coexistence" approach followed during the mid-1950s and, above all, the passage of time.

Perhaps the greatest obstacle to the emergence of a new imaginative foreign effort is China's domestic turmoil. The Cultural Revolution, in effect, removed China from the international arena. Peking may be content to continue this isolationist policy while coping with its staggering internal problems. At any rate, the certain continuation of intense preoccupation with domestic problems suggests that Peking will continue to play a passive international role, reacting to events rather than shaping them.

As long as Mao Tse-tung remains at the helm, China's leaders are unlikely to initiate many positive programs of development. As a result, any successor regime will have to cope with enormous problems of reconstruction while attempting to rule a demoralized and possibly fractious nation. The prospects for a new regime's success will probably be in direct proportion to its ability to abandon Mao's revolutionary dogma in practice and to recognize that the content of his latest programs have proved irrelevant to China's problems. Taking the longest view, pragmatic and nationalist considerations involving questions of economic growth, the prestige of the state, and the need for more centralized political order seem bound to prevail. But in this 20th anniversary year of Chinese Communist rule, this is a very long view indeed. [redacted] 25X1

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